

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2613

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS LONDON 09685

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BRITISH PRESS COMMENT ON ELECTIONS

1. DURING PAST WEEK THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE COMMENT IN PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE DAILY AND WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS CONCERNING RHODESIA ELECTION. CORRESPONDENTS, MOST OF THEM WRITING FROM SALISBURY, CONCUR THAT RESULT WILL BE SHOO IN FOR IAN SMITH BUT SOME SUCH AS FINANCIAL TIMES SPECULATE THAT INDEPENDENTS AND RHODESIA PARTY CANDIDATES HAVE CHANCE IN HANDFUL (3-5) OF MARGINAL SEATS.

2. TIMES ON JULY 30 HAS REPORT FROM SALISBURY CLAIMING BISHOP MUZOREWA WARNED THAT A VOTE FOR THE RULING . RHODESIA FRONT PARTY WOULD BE A VOTE FOR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN WHITES AND BLACKS. LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR THE FRONT WOULD CAUSE THE ANC TO BOYCOTT A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AND MAKE SETTLEMENT IMPOSSIBLE. TIMES CORRESPONDENT CONCLUDED BISHOP'S WORDS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON VOTING PATTERN. THE GUARDIAN ON SAME DATE CLAIMS THAT IN AN ELECTION-EVE ADDRESS SMITH CALLED FOR UNITY TO SOLVE INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND REACH SETTLEMENT

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WITH BRITAIN AND ALSO CLAIMED THAT HIS TALKS WITH

MUZOREWA "HAD BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN WE ANTICIPATED."
OF THE 16 SEATS RESERVED FOR AFRICANS 8 ARE DIRECTLY
ELECTED AND 8 TRIBALLY ELECTED. DESPITE ANC BOYCOTT OF
ELECTIONS, 5 AFRICANS RUNNING FOR ELECTED SEATS WHO ARE
ANC SUPPORTERS ARE EXPECTED TO WIN IN THEIR DISTRICTS.
ALL OTHER AFRICAN SEATS EXPECTED TO GO TO PRO SMITH
CANDIDATES.

3. ELECTION CAMPAIGN DESCRIBED AS LETHARGIC AND
UNINTERESTING WITH MAIN QUESTIONS SUCH AS RHODESIA'S
FUTURE PROSPECTS AND EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE
BEING IGNORED. MOST CORRESPONDENTS BELIEVE DEVELOPMENTS
IN MOZAMBIQUE WILL WORK IN SMITH'S FAVOR BECAUSE WHITE
ELECTORATE'S RESPONSE WILL BE TO HEED HIS CALL FOR
"UNITY." SMITH'S ATTACKS ON RHODESIA PARTY FOR "APPEASE-
MENT AND SELL OUT" GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY. SMITH'S PROMISE
TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH ANC AFTER ELECTIONS DISCOUNTED BY
CORRESPONDENTS ALL OF WHOM HAVE COMMENTED ON IRRELEVANCE
OF ELECTION IN SO FAR AS SOLVING THE CONSTITUTIONAL DIS-
PUTE IS CONCERNED GIVEN BOYCOTT OF ELECTION BY ANC.

4. COMMENT: AS SEEN BY BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS ON SPOT,
ELECTION IS YET ANOTHER INDICATION THAT SMITH AND GREAT
MAJORITY OF WHITE RHODESIANS SIMPLY UNABLE OR UNWILLING
TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS THEY FACE IN ADJUSTING TO INDEPEND-
ENCE OF MOZAMBIQUE, EFFECT OF GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS INSIDE
RHODESIA ITSELF AND GROWING DISENCHANTMENT BY SOUTH
AFRICAN AUTHORITIES WITH RHODESIAN PERFORMANCE.

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